

Winter Sports Safety Tips

Adapted from [safekids.org](https://www.safekids.org), [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) and [healthier.stanfordchildrens.org](https://www.healthier.stanfordchildrens.org)

Winter is here, and along with it come many great opportunities to get outside and enjoy some winter sports. Activities such as sledding, skiing and ice skating great ways to keep the whole family active during the cold months. Staying safe and healthy is an important part of the fun.

Staying warm is the first step in preventing hypothermia or frostbite during the winter months. Dress in layers and use insulated gloves, hats and boots to protect little fingers and toes. Make sure kids head indoors for regular breaks to warm up.



We don't often think of dehydration or sunburn in the winter, but these can happen, too. UV rays come through the clouds, especially at high altitudes. Put sunscreen on any exposed skin, such as the face and ears.

Little bodies sweat when they're playing hard. Have children drink plenty of water before, during and after playing outside to prevent dehydration. Part of the excitement of winter sports is that they're fast, using snow, ice and hills to boost the fun. These elements also carry a risk of injury. Here are a few sport specific suggestions to keep accidents to a minimum.

Sledding

Keep sleds away from motor vehicles, including being pulled behind them.

Sled feet first or sitting up, not head first.

Avoid crowded areas and keep little children separated from older children.



Skiing and Snowboarding

Never ski or snowboard alone.

Children should be supervised.

Everyone, adults and children, should wear helmets. Goggles are also suggested.

Be aware of your child's ability to handle the run.

Skating

Avoid eating any food or candy while skating.

Move in the same direction as the crowd.

Consider helmets and other protective equipment, especially for new learners.



Snowmobiling

Travel at safe speeds.

Wear helmets, goggles, and other safety equipment.

Do not use a snowmobile to pull sleds.

The AAP suggests that children under age 6 don't ride snowmobiles. Children under age 16 shouldn't drive them.

Many of the outdoor sports we have so much fun doing in the winter also have some risks. Being smart while playing can help prevent injuries and keep us going out for more fun!

6 Ways to Combat Cold and Flu Season

By Chakell Wardleigh on selecthealth.org

No one wants to catch a cold, sniffles with a stuffy nose, chills, fever, or sore throat—especially during the holiday season. Here are seven ways you can defend yourself and your family from flu viruses that could ruin all the holiday fun.

1. Get A Flu Shot

This seems like a no-brainer, but you might be surprised how many people skip getting their annual flu shot. Making the time for a flu shot is worth it. It may prevent you from getting sick, as well as protect the people around you, including those more vulnerable to illness like babies, children, and older adults.

2. Use Hand Sanitizer

Always wash your hands: before and after you eat, before and after you remove your contact lenses, after you sneeze, and after you touch a public doorknob. Simply practicing good hygiene can make all the difference between you and a wicked virus.

3. Eat Your Veggies

Fruits and veggies are packed with vitamins and minerals that can give your immune system the boost it needs to fight off the germs of flu season. Specifically, leafy, green vegetables are great for immunity. So, bring on the broccoli arugula salad!



4. Get Some Sun

Unfortunately, more and more Americans are suffering from vitamin D deficiency (the sunshine vitamin). When you lack this important vitamin, it can lead to a weakened immune system and put you at risk for even more diseases.

5. Keep Moving

Exercising is essential to keeping your immune system ready to fight. Even going on a walk three times a week can keep you from making a trip to the doctor's office.

6. Sharing Is Bad (Just This Once)

During flu season, forget everything your mom taught you about sharing. To avoid sharing germs, don't share drinks, lip balm, food, towels, or any other personal items. And make sure to regularly wash the toys your children share. This might be a bit of a hassle, but if it saves you and your family from the crippling effects of the flu, then it's worth it.

Car Seat Corner

Q: How can I keep my child warm during the winter? I know they shouldn't wear a coat in the car.



A: You're correct, we don't want anything between your child and the harness of their car seat. After they're properly buckled, you can tuck a blanket around them, or put their coat on backwards to help keep them cozy.

If you're wondering how puffy is too puffy, do a practice test at home. Put your child in their coat and harness them into their car seat. Do a pinch test at the shoulder straps to check for tightness by pinching your fingers to test for excess webbing. You shouldn't be able to pinch any extra strap.

Remember this bulky coat rule applies to adults as well. Puffy coats create space between your body and the seatbelt. So you too need to take off your puffy coat in the car.